



HOW SOME PEOPLE GET ON IN LONDON.



LONDON contains 2,500,000 inhabitants, or thereabouts, the great bulk of whom have some amount of coin in their pockets. There must be a living to be made out of them by any lady or gentleman possessed of a moderate degree of ingenuity. Two millions and a half of human beings, who must be fed, and clothed, and lodged; who are afflicted with various diseases; who are constantly at loggerheads with each other; who must be consoled in their miseries, and amused in their prosperity; who must be conveyed hither and thither in cabs and omnibuses; who have immortal aspirations, and are troubled with corns;—surely there must be something grievously amiss in the mental organisation of any one who cannot manage to screw the means of an easy existence out of the complicated necessities and follies of such an enormous mass of human beings.

The unlikelyest men “get on,” the likeliest men “get off,” in this desperate struggle; for the struggle is a desperate one, save in the cases of those who are born in trade-purple, and who inherit fortunes, or the means of making them. There must, however, be something wrong about our

usual definitions in these matters. We have not yet arrived at exact conceptions of likely and unlikely men.

The possession of brilliant intellectual qualities is, in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand, a bar, not a help, to advancement in the world. If you try to cut a stone with a razor, the razor will lose its edge, and the stone remain uncut. A very high education again, in the majority of instances, unfits a man for a contest with his fellows. You have rifled the cannon till the strength of the metal is gone. Each individual will just bear so much of intellectual culture, and no more, without loss of moral vigour. A too early and too sudden success has proved the ultimate ruin of thousands; if, again, success be too long deferred, the courage of others will give way. Lord Eldon used to say that the possession of a bare competence was, with rare exceptions indeed, an absolute bar to all chance of forensic distinction. Within my own experience of the struggles of the struggling profession suggested, I have seen the absolute necessity of providing means for a bare livelihood until the opportunity of entering upon the exercise of the profession might arise, produce similar results.

Speaking in general terms, and omitting for the moment all consideration of those extraordinary men who from time to time flash like comets through the firmament of humanity, I should say

that a somewhat dull unimaginative man, with great powers of continuous labour, and the patience to abide results, and profit by the failures of his more brilliant fellow-creatures, is the likeliest man ultimately to “get on” in London. Youths of a more filibustering turn of mind, who are impelled by their own inner restlessness to take the chances of the game as it is played out in Australia or California, of course possess, and had need possess, other qualities. In London the faculty of sitting still on a chair or stool is largely rewarded; but then it is a faculty which in the majority of instances can only be educed by culture. Few men on the sunny side of forty can sit still.

Again, it appears to me that people in London obtain great rewards and emoluments, simply because they are forty years of age and upwards. A curate's most brilliant pulpit effusions stand little chance by the side of his rector's prose. Medical men get trusted, simply because their names have remained for twenty years on the same brass plate, on the same green doors. Men of letters, indeed, obtain distinctions and notoriety at an earlier period of life, but they do not very commonly reap the harvest until they are past forty, and are writing not quite for immor-

tality. This, however is fair enough; they are but discounting their past career, and the British public will for a long time continue to honour their drafts, which, in truth, at the time of presentation, should scarcely contain the words "for value received."

There is also another point well worthy of consideration,—it is a great thing to be fat. To be a fat man is a great element of success in London. The world is willing to pay heavily for ballast. In almost every social circle you enter you will find a fat man to be the king of it. How unctuously common-places fall from his mouth, as though they were good things. How impossible it is to maintain against such an one that six times seven are forty-two, or that King George III. used to reside occasionally at Weymouth. He will smile blandly at you over a vast expanse of white waistcoat, and impart to the glass of sherry which he is sipping the force of a syllogism. You are lost in the opinion of the company, and retire into yourself with what our French neighbours would call "a yellow smile," when you are instantly set down as an ill-conditioned fellow, deaf to the voice of reason. Let every one who can contrive it be fat and be forty. So will he surely sit under his own vine and his own fig-tree, and be glad. London is the paradise of men of sixteen stone. The rule, however, is not quite absolute. I have known a few thin men to succeed; but the laurel crown is scarcely ever awarded to them in a hearty and genial way. They get on as vampires and ghouls get on, by sucking the blood of innumerable victims. Their fellow-creatures are to this class of adventurers just so many oysters. They swallow them, but they do not fatten upon them. Neither did the late Mr. Dando. If any scheme be afoot for farming mankind for the profit of a few, of course a fat man will be the chairman, but a thin man will undertake the general management of the business.

I will only venture to add another preliminary remark or two. Next to corpulence I would place the faculty of "self-assertion," as the second qualification of getting on in London, or indeed in any quarter of the globe of which I have had any experience. In sunny days, long since past, I remember to have visited in company with some friends, the beautiful Glen of Analfi in the Salernitan Gulf. We engaged there a boat with four rowers and a steersman. The father steered, and his four sons laboured at the oars. Scarcely had we got out to sea when the unassuming mariner addressed us in these words: "Signori miei—la mia barca é buona e bella—i miei figliuoli sono buoni e belli—io anche sono buono e bello!" The fellow's boat wasn't a bit better than a dozen others which were lying there on the shore, his sons did not keep very good time, and subsequently when we hoisted a sail, the paternal helmsman was continually sending his marvellous craft up into the wind. But the thing "paid;" by sheer force of bragging the man got more custom than his fellows. It is by no means impolitic in London to follow a similar system to that of my worthy friend, the Amalfiote boatman. *My* pill will cure all your ailments; *my* Eureka shirt will fit you to a nicety; remark the tone, the colour,

the design, the what-d'ye-call-it in *my* picture; *my* play—Oh, injured Gallia!—is the only purely original thing of the season, alone I did it; do you bruise your oats in *my* way? If you cannot set any little performance of your own upon its legs, then boldly establish yourself as a censor or critic. Put the world to rights. Although you could not decorate a public-house door with a Cat and Fiddle, or a half-length of Sir Charles Napier in a creditable way, go in boldly, and regret that Mr. Millais has not an eye for colour, that Mr. Watts' portraits are deficient in depth, and that Mr. Hook has such a poor idea of water. The divine art of music also offers a large harvest to any gentleman who may be quite unable to whistle three bars of "Rule Britannia," as they were written. It is not even necessary to say much if you are desirous of founding a reputation as a critic—or oracle. Think of the great statesman in Sheridan's play, who gained his honours by shaking his head in an emphatic manner. Douglas Jerrold in one of those marvellous epigrammatic sketches of his—he was not one of your critical, shake-head men!—drew a picture of a gentleman who passed through life universally respected and feared upon the strength of this short speech—"Ah! I could say something, but I won't." The thunderbolt was always kept in reserve. He walked amongst a crowd with a loaded pistol in his hand which he never discharged. At length when the doctor had taken his last fee, and the patient his last bolus, the mourning friends who surrounded the death-bed of this illustrious man intreated him not to go out of the world without informing them of the true nature of the withering sarcasm which had been kept in store for so many years. The poor fellow tried to shake his head for the last time, and while the pallor of death was stealing over his countenance murmured in a feeble way, "Ah! I could say it, but I won't;" and then the oracle was for ever dumb. This also is a good system.

I protest that when I consider the magnitude of the task I have undertaken, I shudder at my own rashness. Put yourself on the top of an omnibus, and drive through London from north to south, and from west to east through the interminable rows of palaces, villas, houses, cottages, and ask yourself the question how it is that the inhabitants contrive to pay for their subsistence? Whence comes the money with which they are fed, clothed, and lodged? I suppose it requires something about 125,000*l.* simply to feed London for one day, estimating the sum spent on food at one shilling a head. This value is absolutely consumed and made away with, unless some of these wonderful projects for ruining the guano birds should take effect. There is something approaching to 50,000,000*l.* per annum gone at once. If the *l. s.* estimate be thought too high, on account of the babies and beggars, set it at what you will the result will be astounding.

Then there is the clothing, and the lodging, and the physis, and the consumption of horse-life for the purposes of conveyance; and the luxuries and superfluities. Walk along the public streets on any fine Sunday morning, and see the swarming crowds of reasonably well-attired people. The

very servant wenches have upon their heads and backs better bonnets, shawls, and gowns than the grandmothers of their mistresses ever dreamed of. Is it an outside calculation to say, that at noon on any given summer Sunday the apparel then actually worn by every inhabitant of London, including dukes and costermongers, duchesses and beggar-women, might be set at 1*l.* per head as an average term? Why then you have the sum of 2,500,000*l.* sterling, walking about and airing itself in the streets; lounging in fashionable chapels, or waiting about to fetch the baked shoulders of mutton and potatoes, nicely browed, from the various bakers, as soon as service is over. If 2,500,000*l.* is actually worn, surely another equal value is in reserve in cupboards, drawers, wardrobes, and what not. Then you have 5,000,000*l.* worth of clothes at once; and this stock is in course of constant renewal. I wish I knew how to set about making an approximative guess at the money value of London as it stands; but the task is beyond my powers of calculation. No doubt some of those wonderful men who practise as actuaries, and who assist Mr. Maun in his ingenious inquiries, could give us an idea upon this subject.

There then is the golden pippin—but how do men get a bite at it? There are the various trades and professions; there is speculation; there is the marriage-market. Of course it is but fair to notice, in a cursory way, the fact that innumerable fortunes which are made elsewhere are spent in London. River frontages at Melbourne drive about Hyde Park, drawn by pairs of well-stepping bays. The money which pays for calomel in London was earned at Calcutta. All this, however, is beside the purpose of our present inquiry. When we have exhausted all the categories of what may be called, though merely for distinction's sake, the legitimate trades and professions, there remain countless other fashions of getting on in an irregular way. The gleaners sometimes do better on their own account than the harvest-men. Then we have amongst us a numerous class of Bedouins and Mohicans who live comfortably enough, as long as the career lasts, by plundering the community. There are the begging-letter writers, a most ingenious class, admirable for their industry: the regular beggars, who spend the proceeds of their day's whining upon gin, and ham, and eggs: the people who live by loan-offices: the people who live by burning their houses down, and cheating the insurance office: the bill swindlers: the horse chaunters: and so forth. All these people get on somehow; though, happily, it is a well-established rule, that London rogues give themselves the greatest amount of trouble, and produce the smallest results. Lazy men should take to honesty as to an easy-chair.

It may, I think, be safely asserted, that the first and most difficult step for any young adventurer who seriously wants to get on in London, is to pass from the class of servants to that of free-agents. The term "service" must be understood in a wide sense, and applies equally to an upper clerk in the Foreign Office. I hope that is a genteel calling—as to the servant who sits beside

the coachman on the box of his wife's brongham. So long as any other man, or set of men, have a right to discount your labour, to circumscribe your field of action, to monopolise what you would call the sweat of your brow, if you were a ploughman—but which, as you are a Londoner, I will rather speak of as the sweat of your brain—you are not a free-agent, but a servant. If you are a man of moderate wishes and aspirations, you may stand still under these conditions quietly and comfortably enough, and be at sixty years of age cashier in the bank which you entered as junior clerk when you were a boy. If what is termed an appointment was procured for you to Somerset House or the Admiralty, you may ultimately rise to a magnificent income of 700*l.* or 800*l.* a year, live in a nice little semi-detached villa residence at Stamford Hill, and procure admission for one of your children to the Blue Coat School. You may become an admirable specimen of the British Paterfamilias, which is a very respectable position—but I scarcely think you could be said to have "got on" in London. I say that the man who really gets on, is either he who forces his way to distinction by a *coup*—as a fortunate marriage, or a lucky speculation,—or the man who seriously says to himself, from childhood upwards, "if I can induce every Londoner—man, woman, and child—to give me one penny sterling, I shall realise considerably more than 10,000*l.*, and with that sum of 10,000*l.*, I may become a Rothschild or an Overstone: or if I prefer quiet, I can invest it safely in $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. securities, and sit upon a swing-gate and whistle for the remainder of my earthly pilgrimage." That is your style of man to get on. Of course a man does not precisely say this to himself in terms. The more usual calculation is to bring the battering engine to bear upon a particular section of the community, and to extract from each of that section a larger sum; or to become a candle-maker, or tailor, or a brewer, or distiller, or to deal in a wholesale way in bricks or timber, or in some article of general demand, and divide the spoil with a numerous band of competitors or fellow-labourers. Observe throughout, I have taken the acquisition of wealth, or at least competence, as the test of "getting on;" for if I were to speak of philosophers and men of science, and benefactors to their species who care for none of these things,—I wonder where they live—it might lead me a little too far. But if you want to get on in trade, there is the little preliminary difficulty of finding capital, which must be overcome. The difficulty is not uncommonly met by starting in business without it; but then the chapter of accommodation-bills, and selling under cost price, is soon opened, and Basinghall Street looms heavily under your lee—to make no mention of another thoroughfare which connects Ludgate Hill on the south with Aldersgate Street on the north.

It is, however, to be remarked that the greatest fortunes which have been realised in London trade have been made by men who have started with nothing—I believe it is the more usual thing to say, who came to London, each future millionaire, with half-a-crown in his pocket. It is never one shilling, or one sovereign—the

precise sum is half-a-crown. They must have been men of special faculties, and it is probable that the stern preliminary apprenticeship, when they were bound to sweep out the shop, carry parcels, and sleep on the counter, or under it, may have been necessary, in order to harden them for the coming strife. It may be requisite to spend certain years in the Desert before you are fit to carry on the battle amongst the vines and fig-trees of the Promised Land. Our romance-writers have indulged us largely with pictures of the struggles amongst the Professional Classes. I should like to see a few good sketches of the Romance of London Trade. The amount of acuteness, and industry, and energy—(all charlatanism apart)—brought to bear upon the concerns of any great London tradesman's establishment—be he publisher, wine-merchant, brewer, bill-discounter, dealer in marquerie and curiosities, or what you will—would be very surprising to those whose attention has not been drawn to the subject in a particular way. Men don't get on in trade in London, so as to attain a high place amongst their thousand rivals, without the possession of some qualities and faculties which would be worthy of one's notice and consideration. I am bound to add, that I have been told by a friend, who himself occupies a very distinguished position in the City of London, and who has had abundant opportunities of knowing the story of the origin and progress of the great City Houses, that to many of them their prosperity came by mere chance; in other cases it was thrust upon them against their will. They happened, for example, to have become involved in certain agencies which they would have gladly disavowed, and which they endeavoured to repudiate by all means at their disposal, but they were held *volentes volentes* to their bargain, and to the acquisition of unbounded wealth. In other cases, the possession of securities, of which they would gladly have washed their hands, has forced their operations into particular channels—and through these channels, in the long run, they have threaded their way into full Pactolus against their own will, despite of their own most strenuous efforts to turn back.

I know it is usual for men of letters in sketches of this kind to call particular attention to the struggles of their own class. But the literary class is but a small class after all, and even if we throw in the artists and musicians, the total number will be comparatively inconsiderable by the side of those who earn their living by buying and selling, and by commerce in its general branches. After all, I do not see why the struggles of gentlemen who write indifferent books and paint indifferent pictures should be more interesting than the efforts of persons who sell indifferent butter, or milk which has been largely drawn from the cow with the iron tail. I leave, of course, out of the question the few men of real genius and originality of conception whom any country contains at any given time—they will surely make their own way through all difficulties, and require but little help or sympathy. In Art or Literature it is a dreadful thing to be a Frog, and to undertake the Bull's business. Any young

man who comes to London with reasonable capacity for literary work, and who is not so silly as to fancy himself a man of genius when he is not one, will, without much difficulty, find the means of earning a respectable living, so he be industrious and punctual to his engagements. Neither the London publishers nor the London public are in a conspiracy to put down literary talent, or even literary energy. The sooner, however, young neophytes of this class leave off writing monodies on Chatterton, and recognise the great fact that unless they can take place amongst the All England Eleven, a literary life is a life of hard labour reasonably well rewarded, the sooner they will be likely to "get on" in London.

I spoke just now of getting on by "*coups*," and divided this class of success mainly into two heads—speculations in the marriage market or the money market. I have hitherto only been considering the case of men; but when we come to this division of the subject we are approaching more sacred ground—how do young ladies get on in London? Unfortunately, marriage is almost a woman's only chance in life. The alternative is—what? A very few may support themselves by literary labour, and if you want to see specimens of ladies who have devoted themselves to that species of industry, they are to be seen in that wonderful new reading-room of the Museum. I would not for any consideration say one word which should suggest ridicule on such a point. God speed them, say I, and that the more that I have known instances amongst them where the proceeds of their honourable toil have been ungrudgingly bestowed upon procuring comforts and medical aid for a sick parent, husband, or child. How industriously they sit all through the long summer days at their work, with just an occasional pause, as though the picture of the little lodging in which the one for whose sake this toil had been undertaken had flashed across their minds. But it won't do—time is too precious to be wasted even on the luxury of home thoughts. Till the hour of closing comes the pen must be busy with the note-book. I wonder what manner of work will be ultimately forthcoming from those piles of huge ponderous volumes by which they are surrounded. It used to be a very hard time of it for these poor ladies in the old reading-room of the Museum where there was that dreadful odour which might be warranted to produce headache in persons of the soundest constitution within two hours. But now the Museum ladies have a magnificent Pantheon sort of place in which they may prosecute their labours quite in a regal way—as undisturbed and as free from all chances of intrusion as though they were in their own drawing-rooms. Let us hope they may "get on."

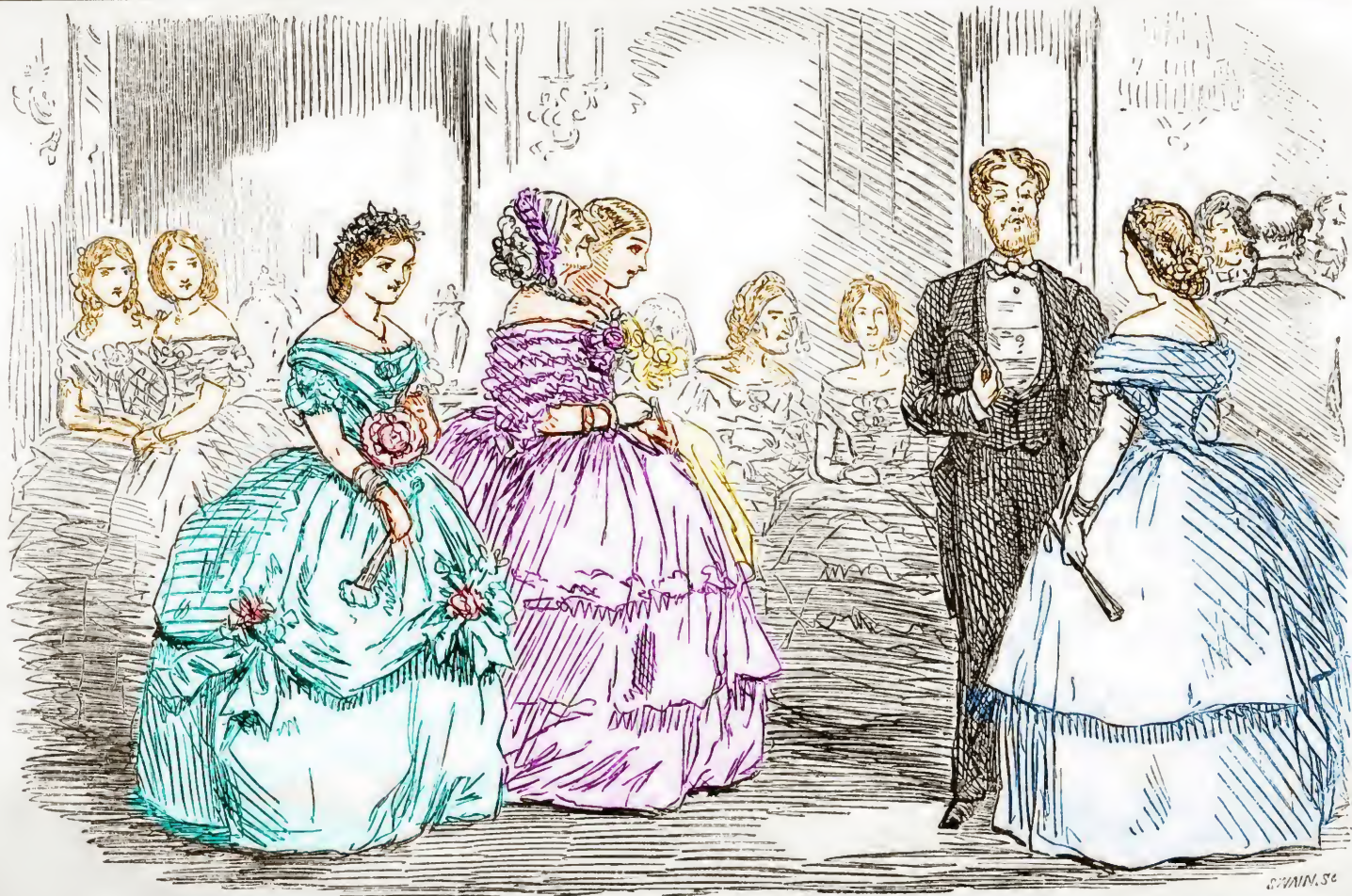
Another alternative, which occasionally turns out well enough, but in the majority of instances must be painful in the extreme, is that of the governess's life. Those who draw fortunate numbers in this lottery may glide on quietly enough from youth to womanhood, from womanhood to old age, and be ultimately provided for by their former pupils; but I should fear there must be many internal struggles and heart-burnings even under the most favourable circumstances which

a man can with difficulty appreciate or understand. The picture of the governess is not a pleasant one as she sits surrounded by a parcel of noisy children, into whose reluctant heads it is her duty to instil such portions of human learning as they are capable of containing. She is at the piano, counting "One, two, three,—one, two, three," whilst two of her pupils are endeavouring to thump an infantine duct out of the jingling instrument—which is good enough for the school-room—and a small boy on a stool in the corner is sulking over his Latin grammar. Even when all goes reasonably well, there must, one should think, be moments when the thought will occur to her that such a thing as a home of her own might be a human possibility. In the little desk upstairs in which she keeps her treasures, I should not wonder if there were a few letters written by a hand which is now cold in death, or by one who has thought that it might tend more to his advantage and advancement in life if he did not encumber himself with what are called "responsibilities?" I hope he may lose his digestive powers, at an early period of his career, and if he should marry well, and be thoroughly miserable, it will serve him right. Nor is the duty of acting as "companion" to a peevish old lady, and attending to the nervous ailments of a fat wheezing lap-dog, a very enviable lot. There are troubles, too, with the servants which do not meet the eye of the casual observer, as well as the more patent inconveniences of such a situation. Still food and shelter are to be obtained in such a way as well as a small legacy when the "Resurgam" business is taken in hand, and the will is opened, and the "companion" must again seek her fortune, and try to get on in a new world.

When I think of what a terrible struggle existence is to women who have not the protection of a father or husband interposed between them and the raging battle of life, I can scarcely venture to censure the young ladies, who are ever on the outlook for a good match, with any degree of acrimony. Who can tell what the secret history of their homes may be? What are the scenes of domestic broil to which they are daily and reluctant witnesses?—how are they not worried and baited by their very mothers to make a successful foray upon elder-son-dom? A London ball-room, where the young ladies are busily engaged in "getting on" is, however, a curious scene enough to a philosophic eye. The first condition necessary that you may be able to watch the manoeuvres going on around you in a calm and dispassionate manner, is that an idea should prevail amongst dowagers that you are a man of no account in a money way. You will then be left to conduct your investigations in peace. I like to see three or four of these graceful combatants trying for the same prize. Let us look around us—a tall young man reputed to be the lord of unbounded wealth has just stepped into the arena with his crush hat under his arm. There is a general stir amongst the formidable dowagers in the back-ground, who, by ingenious flutterings of fans and eye-telegrams, hoist the signal for the light craft to engage the enemy. They are nothing loth—the tall dark young lady with a languishing glance fires the

first shot. A spirited gushing young thing with candid blue eyes, and great decision of character, takes a young lady friend by the arm, and in the artless confidence of virgin friendship leads her across the room as if she had some secret of great weight and moment to impart to her,—but as they pass the young millionaire she pours into him a good raking fire from the corner of her eye, and takes up position so as to silence the artillery of the more languid combatant. An elderly lady, with two seraggy, and not very fascinating syrens—her daughters—sails up, and is just on the very point of grappling the prize, when she is cut off by old Lady Sophia Spatterdash, who undertakes, in a professional way, the business of bringing young ladies out, and finding husbands for them. At this moment she has under her charge Miss Eveline Dermott, and Miss Harriett Fluketon; Miss Eveline is all soul, like one of those fair abstractions of Mr. Thornburn's, who look as if they drew their nourishment from the milky way. Miss Harriet is a good deal "body"—a young lady with a cheery laugh, and not a bad hand at going across country. Young Millions must be hard to please if one or other of these entrancing creatures will not suit what the wretch would call "his book." Lady Sophia marches up to the enemy at once with all the confidence of a veteran. The careful mother with the two young ladies who are not inclined to *em-bonpoint* stands no more chance against her than militia against regular troops. As for the gushing young thing with the blue eyes, Lady Sophia would box her ears upon the spot if she ventured to interfere with her plans, so she has no resource but to look at the Spatterdash detachment with a look of astonishment, whisper something in the ear of her confidante, and burst into a laugh. Lady Sophia sees and appreciates it all, but she is far too old a soldier to waste fire at so critical a moment upon so contemptible a foe, always reserving to herself the privilege of saying something spiteful to our gushing friend at a later period of the evening when apt occasion presents itself for doing so in the most offensive manner possible; and Lady S. is not a bad judge of such an occasion. Before half a minute has elapsed, the experienced dowager has asked Miss Evelina if she would not like to take a turn, and told young Millions off to carry the duty out. In a moment they are threading the mazes of the dance, and Miss Evelina is "getting on."

These struggles have their ludicrous side; but yet we must not judge too harshly of these poor girls who are struggling for prizes in the matrimonial market *per fas et nefas*. Make clean breasts of it my masculine friends, and tell me, when driven to it by sharp necessity, have you never taken extraordinary leaps in order to avoid the pungency of that suggestive bayonet with which Anangke—she of the thin lips and stony eyes—has goaded you on? You must get on in your trades, professions, and callings whatever they may be. Marriage is a woman's profession. We have had impressive biographies by the cart-load, in which we are informed how Lord Eldon, Benjamin Franklin, and other worthies have "got on" in the world. Each of these contains a



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chapter entitled "Early Struggles." Now I should like to see a true and honest biography of Miss Jane Smith who was so pretty, and had not a penny, and who was worried by her mamma, and teased by her ugly cousins; how hard she practised, how industriously she danced, how ingeniously she contrived to make her few *chiffons* do duty over and over again, like a regiment of stage soldiers. She slew many victims, you will say, in the course of her triumphant career. Perhaps Jane Smith did so—so did Napoleon Buonaparte. But Jane was only solving the subsistence question, whilst the stern Corsican was engaged in cutting throats for glory. The poverty-stricken moths who came fluttering round that clear brilliant taper which was known to mortals in ball-rooms as "Jane Smith," danced round her at their own proper peril. If they singed their wings it was their own affair. Before they took the matter in hand they knew perfectly well that J. S. had not one penny—neither had they. She is now not a little inclined to *embonpoint*, and is the honoured and sentimental wife of Lewis Pimento, Esq., Molasses Lodge, Barnes Common, and recommends her young friends never to listen to any voice, but the voice of the heart. J. S., however, has "got on." Such a biography as the one indicated would be exceedingly difficult of execution, it would require a woman to feel it, and a man to write it.

I would not, however, leave it on record as an opinion of mine that it is only the ladies who do business on the Matrimonial Bialto. I remember well, when I was a youth fresh from the University, calling one morning upon two young wisecracks like myself, scarcely with the down upon their cheeks. I found the foolish boys engaged in preparing lists of the heiresses of that season. Of course, the only difficulty was to decide in what quarters the two handkerchiefs should be thrown. The two Sultans had been distinguished in the University examinations, and they took it as a matter of course that they were to retain the same position throughout life. Alas! they had counted without my revered friend, Lady Sophia Spatterdash, who would think no more of putting her foot on a Senior Wrangler than I would of knocking the ash off a cigar. I am bound to say that they did not subsequently act upon their then views. Perhaps Lady S. S. did put her foot on them; perhaps they did not like the look of the thing when they were brought face to face with the little drawbacks upon their projects. One is now a fat rector in Lincolnshire, with eleven children; he married his cousin, who had not one sixpence. The other took to the bar, and conducted to the hymeneal altar a young lady possessed of 2500*l.*, which he insisted should be settled upon herself. He has toiled like a galley-slave in his profession, and is now beginning to "get on." These two lads were, of course, of the fine metal from which Englishmen are forged. They had indulged in that silly dream for a moment, just as they might have taken up a bad French novel, and imagined themselves the heroes of it; but when they tried to act the parts they broke down, and well was it for them that it was so. Many men, however, will and do take this

fatal leap every season, without considering how miserable the speculation is in a mercantile point of view. Marry 10,000*l.* or 5000*l.* a year, my friends, if you can, and go in, and be stall-fed oxen for the remainder of your days. But do not undertake to support a lady and her family until the end of your lives for an insufficient consideration. The bargain is a bad one on your side. Of course I am speaking of mercenary marriages; but I should think much better of your chances of ultimate success if you had the nerve boldly to throw your hat into the ring, and fight the battle of life out in a manly and creditable way.

Falling back upon the general argument, it would seem by the practice of late years, that one of the surest methods of attaining success is the lavish use of advertisements. This is of course, but self-assertion proclaiming itself in printed characters, a foot and a-half in length, upon dead walls. It is an ascertained fact with regard to some of the best known quack medicines that their sale bears an exact proportion to the number of times they are advertised. The expenses are enormous, but still if he conducts his operations wisely, the proprietor is able to realise a very comfortable living upon the margin between income and outlay. Say that you have discovered, by a series of judicious experiments suggested by a hint taken from an old Coptic MS., that the ordinary stinging-nettle—so it be properly manipulated—is a sovereign remedy against all the ills that flesh is heir to. You have at length succeeded in educing the virtues of this plant in an irreproachable way, and combining them in the form of a pill—you would then, I conceive, proceed in the following way. You would give your pill a Greek name—you would engage a sufficient number of hands for manufacturing purposes. You would hire a shop in a leading thoroughfare and put something in the windows—say a large snake under glass—which should be so attractive to the *gamins* as to cause a permanent stoppage. You would send men about the streets in Egyptian costumes—they are most telling when they walk solemnly in Indian file—you would cover the walls of the metropolis, and stuff both the metropolitan and provincial papers full of advertisements all laudatory of the pill. At the end of the year your account would probably stand thus:—

Stinging-nettles	Nil.
Expense of collection, and cartage	500 0 0
Rent, wages, and manufacture	1000 0 0
Advertisements	8000 0 0
	<hr/>
	9,500 0 0
By Pills, less commission	12,000 0 0
	<hr/>
Profit	2,500 0 0

No notice is taken of small matters in the above calculation, which is purely approximative—but if a man can succeed in making 9500*l.* breed 2500*l.* in the course of a year, he may really be said to be "getting on" in London. Now, whether you are artist, author, tailor, or owner of the Brandy-Ball line of clippers, running between Liverpool and Melbourne, the point is to make the public swallow your pill. Advertise!

I saw a gentleman the other night who was in a

fair way to earning a handsome fortune by mesmerism. He was a Gaul, with a beautiful black beard. He had with him a young lady, a native also of the French empire, whom, by a few passes, he could throw into a state of seeming repose; when she read letters blindfolded, or when the letters were applied to the pit of her stomach she could tell you the contents without the smallest trouble. It was, however, indispensable that the French gentleman should read them first. There is an old Frenchwoman going about the streets of London who, on her side, "gets on" in a singular way. She is constantly to be seen at the northern end of the Burlington Arcade. Two large poodles are her stock in trade. When the exhibition is about to commence, with a wave of her hand she dismisses her two dogs,—the one straightway runs up Cork Street—the other up Old Burlington Street. In Clifford Street they cross each other, and each returns to his mistress by the route on which the other had set out. This ingenious lady is exceedingly well paid for this gratifying exhibition, and so "gets on" comfortably enough.

It would, however, require a volume to describe the manifold manners in which livings are to be earned in the streets of London. So enormous is the amount of money flying about that an Irish lady can support herself in comfort upon an apple-stall in a reasonably good situation. A crossing in a frequented thoroughfare is an estate. Life in London, however, is conducted on a very high pressure system indeed. There is, I fear, far greater difficulty in keeping money than in earning it. So far I have used simply the subsistence test of "getting on," but if one were to speak of the thousand shifts and meannesses of which people are guilty, in order to "get on" in London society where the money enigma has long since received a satisfactory solution, we should come straightway upon half the social vices and follies of the day. I never thought of opening that chapter in the stories of London Life upon the present occasion. As the result of some little experience of human struggles in this great Babylon in which my lot has been cast, I should strongly incline to the opinion that—save in cases where there is a heavy affliction such as blindness, or some disease which paralyses action and leaves a man to the mercy of his fellow-creatures—any man can "get on" in London in some fashion or other, save his own vices or bad habits stand in his way. Charlatanism has a good deal, and chance a great deal to do with the brilliant results; but I have not been writing of men who find Golcondas, but of those who are content to get on in London. A far more dismal story might be told about those who "get off."

GAMMA.